

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3313

September 29, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Secretary Austin,

On August 15, 2022, Michael Gristion, the Sergeant Major of the Army, penned an article titled “The Army’s Financial Readiness Program can help Soldiers fight inflation and manage finances.”<sup>1</sup> Sergeant Major Grinston wrote that, “with inflation affecting everything from gas prices to groceries to rent, some Soldiers and their families are finding it harder to get by on the budget they’ve set and used before.”<sup>2</sup> It is reassuring to hear a senior official within the U.S. Army acknowledge the real and devastating costs of runaway inflation, but it is concerning to read that Sergeant Major Grinston suggested service members utilize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a tool to offset rising prices.<sup>3</sup>

It is highly concerning that the U.S. Army is directing service members to apply for SNAP benefits because of the real-world consequences of the policy failures of the Biden Administration. Within this year’s House version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), I fought to include an amendment that would have increased the size of inflation bonus payments provided in the bill to match the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase rate.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, that amendment was blocked by the Democrat-controlled House Rules Committee.

Thankfully, another amendment related to Inflation Bonus Payments for service members was included which allows each bonus payment to be “in an amount determined by the Secretary concerned, based on prevailing economic conditions that adversely affect members, but in no case shall be less than 2.4 percent.”<sup>5</sup> Should this language make it into the version of the NDAA which becomes law, I strongly urge you to use this authority to make Inflation Bonus Payments equal to the most recent CPI level.

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<sup>1</sup> Sergeant Major of the Army Michael A. Grinston, *The Army’s Financial Readiness Program can help Soldiers fight inflation and manage finances*, U.S. Army [https://www.army.mil/article/258256/the\\_armys\\_financial\\_readiness\\_program\\_can\\_help\\_soldiers\\_fight\\_inflation\\_and\\_manage\\_finances](https://www.army.mil/article/258256/the_armys_financial_readiness_program_can_help_soldiers_fight_inflation_and_manage_finances).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Budd Amendment #1182 to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, H.R. 7900, 117th Cong. (2022), [https://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/BUDD\\_135\\_xml220707130800255.pdf](https://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/BUDD_135_xml220707130800255.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, H.R. 7900, 117th Cong. § 615 (2022).

The brave men and women who put their lives on the line in defense of this nation do not deserve to be forced to apply for SNAP in order to feed their families. To truly improve the financial situation of soldiers, the Biden Administration needs to curtail out-of-control spending and ease supply-side roadblocks. Bringing down soaring prices must be the primary agenda item for this government. Our service members deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Budd". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Ted Budd  
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr., President of the United States